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TOWN
&
COUNTRY
CHURCH

These Papers

BECAUSE of wartime printing conditions, it has been found necessary to issue TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH as a bulletin without regular monthly frequency. We expect, however, to be able to make available a series of informal papers, and to print nine of these issues in the course of twelve months, as we had planned and promised. The Committee on Town and Country of the Home Missions Council and the Federal Council of Churches asks you to be patient if copies do not arrive regularly.

Brief stories of what people are doing in local congregations and communities will be the chief features. The aim is to help put the worker in the small community into touch with numerous activities.

Part of Larger Program

The paper will be an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program," that will encourage a national "rural church movement." The paper will be closely linked with a regularly held National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country.

This Issue
No. 9
Published June, 1944

30,000 Mile Circuit—One Rider

LESLIE BAILEY

A LINE drawn rather closely around the circuit assigned to us more than a year ago would encircle a territory in Idaho, including almost 30,000 miles. In the mountains, nestling under giant pines are lumber towns and logging camps. Cramped up in high-walled canyons are mining communities. Neatly packed in side by side are fertile farms of the irrigated sections reclaimed from the sage brush wastes of the American desert, and sprawling lazily in a sheltered valley at the foot of some towering mountain is found a little village, the trading center of a vast grazing district where still one may catch a glimpse of the romantic "Old West."

Fields Reclaimed

Through a program of regular visitation and evangelism, four fields have been reclaimed where church buildings had been abandoned, two churches have been well established, and several other fields are responding in promising fashion.

A month's trip around the circuit, visiting each of our 22 communities, and meeting the people who live there, offers convincing proof that the potential values in human lives and possibilities are worth much more than the milk and honey of the Israelites' Promised Land. Living in these isolated spots, too far removed to permit regular attendance in established churches in neighboring villages, are at least 2,899 people. The only religious services provided for them, aside from a few struggling Sunday schools sponsored by the American Sunday School Union, are those brought by this circuit rider.

During the first year in this work, we traveled a total of 10,839 miles in spite of the fact that tire rationing and inability to get parts for our car kept us off the road too much of the time. In that time we called in homes of the people 1,132 times and in these calls made contacts for Christ and the church with 2,646 people. We held 149 public meetings which were attended by a total of 3,009 people. Eleven persons recorded their decision to live the Christ-like life, while nine adults and one infant were baptized.

Jordan Valley

The response at Jordan Valley, Danner and Arock, in the southern part of Malheur County, Oregon, has been gratifying. On Easter, 1943, the district superintendent was present and preached to 103 persons at the Jordan Valley Church. That night, at Arock, the circuit rider preached to 52 people. Increasing interest is shown in this part of the circuit each month. At Jordan Valley during the past school year a weekday school of religion was conducted, with a regular attendance of 30 persons.

To present a complete picture of what has been accomplished would be a very difficult task. How much has been achieved by a visit in a home where we have presented Christ is hard to measure. To stop at a lonely cabin and visit for a few minutes with a crippled old man, offer prayer in his behalf, and then go on one's way may seem small indeed, but when we return next month and note the eagerness with which he greets us, we know that God has been working in that contact in a way which we are unable to measure. When we have preached what seemed an ordinary sermon and a twelve-year-old lad comes up and says, "I sure liked how you preached tonight," there is no way of knowing how much God is saying to that boy.

Why the Sects Grow

A. J. WALTON

• The sects do not grow as a result of a different theology, teaching or peculiarities. The fundamental or basic differences between Christian groups are not sufficient or sufficiently clear in the minds of American people to account for the phenomenal growth or the decay of any church. Christian churches generally believe in God as the heavenly Father, in Jesus as Lord and Saviour, in repentance, confession, and a life that is a witness to the renewing and changing power of the Spirit of Jesus in a consecrated life, and the church as a body of faithful believers of which Christ is the Head.

These basic truths are vigorously proclaimed by the sects. To be sure the language of interpretation and illustrations used are common to the social and cultural environment of the class of people served. A different phraseology, with emphasis on a somewhat different set of right and wrong practices, and demands for a more vivid manner of witness are emphasized. However the end in view in conduct, inner satisfaction, and devotion are very much the same as that of all Christian groups. They seek right relations to God, conduct becoming the Christian, and zeal in promoting the evangelization of all men. The emphasis is often on childish beginnings and many negatives, but the end sought is a good Christian life.

What is Growth?

Growth is the result of possessing life, obeying the laws of living which demand essential food, exercise, adjustment to change and persistence. Wherever life is, whether in plant, animal, person or organization this process of growth operates if growth takes place.

What is the vital life and the food of these churches? It seems clear that these people—at least many of them —have had a devotional contact with God, and they read, memorize and talk the Scriptures with fanatical persistence. Coupled with this their leaders are tremendously in earnest and seek to fan the zeal and emotions of their followers to great fervor. These efforts lead to zealous participation in concerted listening, singing, praying, and daily conduct after the pattern declared by the leader. Participation under this zealous leadership kindles enthusiasm, deepens confidence, develops skill in responses indicated by the leaders. The constant emphasis on need for each one to be a witness and a personal worker quickens the sense of missions until many achieve the emotional intoxication of crusaders and feel compelled to constantly evangelize and witness.

To think that emotion, zeal and feelings are intended as ends within themselves is to misjudge these people. There are those who view them as ends, but they are the exception even as in other religious groups. These factors are stirred with great energy as a basis or means to secure a type of religious experience and daily conduct understood as pleasing to God and best for the folks concerned. Not all who are greatly moved live out in daily conduct the purpose of the leaders. This type of procedure will inevitably attract many whose emotions are easily stirred and who lack stability. These persons live chameleon like lives. They yield emotionally to every vivid environment, so that we see them very responsive to the group fervor of religion, and equally responsive to the stimulation of worldliness. These churches cannot be judged alone by such persons. Despite this vacillating group, contact with these people will convince one that the average faithful response to the teachings received is high, and devotion to standards taught usually amounts to prejudice or even fanaticism. Prejudice and fanaticism with them are to be recognized as eccentric expressions of loyalty which under different tutelage might well become "good will" with zeal in the best Christian sense.

In Brief Review

We might summarize the implications of this statement by saying that these churches grow because their people are deeply in earnest about the experience they have had of God, their leaders emphasize a vivid portrayal of the Christian message, they are encouraged to have a deep devotion for the Scriptures and to put much emphasis on their use in worship and daily life, they are kept stimulated by constant repetition and reminder of their religious life, and they are fed on a vivid contrast between a life of sin and salvation and between the rewards of a good life and the punishment of a sinful life.

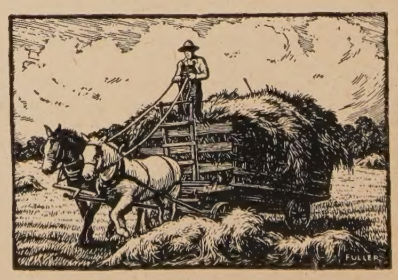
The power of the vernacular, of simplicity, of emotional emphasis of this simple faith and group participation add much to make their procedure effective.

These people have no monopoly on earnestness, the Scriptures, the Christian message, faith, the fact of the wages of sin or zealous loyalty. If these tools used by persons with limited learning can secure notable results, what might they not accomplish if in the hands of learned people they are used with equal zeal and loyalty! What a challenge! Shall the challenge bring glory to our Heavenly Father and blessing to a multitude, or merely criticism for the Sects?

(EDITOR'S NOTE: No attempt has been made here to define "the sect"; the writer simply employs common usage.)

What Kind of Democracy?

• D. Campbell Wyckoff, Staff Assistant of Rural Church and Indian Work, Board of National Missions, Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., writes a study guide for young people entitled "What Kind of Democracy Do You Want?" It is published by Friendship Press, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y. and sells for 25c a copy. The subject matter is of general interest. The situation of the American Indian is discussed as "a test case."



A Conversation Between Two Ministers

EDMUND H. BABBITT

Domini: We had a great service Sunday.

Parson: So did we.

Domini: The choir was at its best. I never heard them sing better. They seemed to lift the congregation heavenward.

Parson: I had to get along as best I could without my choir. The members are not always present. They are mighty good people and they do what they can, but they are not natively endowed as richly as some singers. They do not have time for training.

Domini: And our organist had an offertory that was exceptional.

Parson: In my little church in the country we have to use a piano. Some of those people probably never heard a great pipe organ. We have a reed organ in the church but nobody can play it well enough. We get along with the piano.

Domini: Do you remember how brightly the sun shown last Sunday? It came in that rose window and gave those colors a depth that is rarely seen. We have appreciated the contribution of our parishioners in giving us that $10,000 window.

Parson: Our windows are plain glass and Sunday the sun was so bright on the snow that I had to pull one of those long shades. Just as I got it two-thirds down the whole shade came rattling down. But our people do not mind the plain windows. Their eyes can roam across the open fields. The fields which their heavenly Father created, which they love; the soil from which their living comes.

Domini: I find that our people appreciate the beauty of the sanctuary. The vaulted ceiling, the divided chancel, the high altar, and the reredos all make for a splendid spirit of worship. Really, Parson, those are great aids and I do not know what I would do without them.

Parson: I know what you mean. I have worshipped in your sanctuary and indeed it is beautiful. My sanctuary is beautiful, too, but it is different. I sometimes think we rural men are remiss in not beautifying our churches more than we do. We too often allow posters, banners, charts, and cheap copies of religious pictures to occupy the center of optical attraction. I believe it is a bit more difficult to create a worshipful atmosphere in my sanctuary than in yours.

Domini: I had a great time with my sermon last Sunday. It was a thrilling experience to preach it.

Parson: I also had a great time preaching. Every Sunday on which I can preach the Gospel is great but I have my troubles preparing my sermons. I guess I do not have as many good books as I ought to have. My tools are not too numerous and they are not as sharp as they might be.

Domini: We find that the nursery which is maintained during the church service is a distinct help. It makes it possible for young parents to attend and keeps the children out of the adult service.

Parson: We have all ages in our services—from eight months to eighty years. It is a heartening sight to see the Johnson family—parents, children, and grandparents all sitting in the same pew. But the babies sometimes offer me stiff competition. I also have difficulty building an atmosphere of worship because the sounds carry so well in our church. The floor has no covering although it is clean and is painted. Rural folks are easily distracted by any movement or sound in the congregation.

Domini: Why don't you start a nursery, Parson?

Parson: We have no place but the basement and that is not suitable. You see in my situation a minister has to contend with many hindrances and obstacles. I have problems which the average city pastor never faces. In my church we have so little to work with in equipment and personnel.

Domini: I guess I never fully appreciated some of your difficulties.

Parson: You have people with more ability and training, you have money, helpers, music, books, a nursery, and a score of other things which most rural pastors do not have. We attempt to do much the same work which you do but often it is exceedingly difficult.

Domini: I never thought of it in that way, Parson. Many times I have felt the weight of my own work but probably I did not appreciate the advantages, tools, and helps which I have. You are working under more serious handicaps. A long credit mark should be given you for what you are achieving.

Parson: I am not asking for pity, or for compliments.

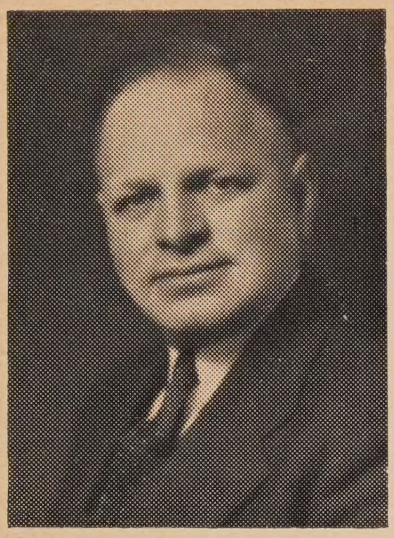
Domini: I know you are not. But you are building the Kingdom. Rural America is the hope of the country and the hope of Christianity. If the truth were known you are undoubtedly doing more with less than we city ministers. Your contribution is significant. I can hear a voice coming down across the centuries and it is saying to you, "Well done thou good and faithful servant."

✠ Our Father in Heaven, Lord of Field and Forest, we thank Thee for the good earth. Forgive us, we beseech Thee, the earth burnt by our sins of pride and stupid power. Teach us anew from the mercy of forgiving fields the wideness of Thine own mercy. Remember the dispossed, give harvests back to desolation. *Amen.*

—Gaius Glenn Atkins

Women's Land Army

• Miss Florence Hall, Director of the Women's Land Army, U. S. Department of Agriculture, announces that this agency will seek to recruit 800,000 workers this year.



Henry S. Randolph

Who Opens the Convocation

Convocation—1944

• The annual National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country will be held at Elgin, Illinois, November 14-16, 1944, under the auspices of the Committee on Town and Country of the Home Missions Council and the Federal Council of Churches. Headquarters will be in the First Methodist Church, Elgin.

Rural ministers and lay leaders from twenty-five denominations and all regions of the country will participate in sixteen commissions which will consider most aspects of the current tasks of the rural church.

The opening address of the Convocation will be delivered by Dr. Henry S. Randolph, of the Board of National Missions, Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., on "The Church and the Rural Life Movement."

Plans for the program of general sessions include a general discussion of the question, "How can the local church assist young people to become farm owners?" Also scheduled is an address by Dr. H. H. Bennett, Director of the Soil Conservation Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, on "The Mission of Soil Conservation."

Consideration will be given to the relation of the city church to the country church. There will be a symposium to which ministers' wives and adult lay leaders and young people will contribute. Representatives of all the national farm organizations and of federal and state government agencies have been invited to participate.

Anyone interested in the church in town and country may attend the Convocation. Because of war-time travel and housing conditions, it will be necessary for all persons who plan to attend to write in advance of October 15, 1944 to the Committee on Town and Country, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, New York, giving denominational connection and the probable time of arrival. A printed program may also be had without charge on application to the Committee.

Off to School

• About 4000 Protestant ministers in town and country churches are attending 44 schools and institutes, in which training for post-war service in rural communities will be stressed, Dr. Mark A. Dawber, Executive Secretary of the Home Missions Council of North America, has announced.

Fifteen of the training centers are institutes, under the auspices of the Committee on Sharecropper Work of the Home Missions Council, to which the ministers who serve in farming communities where sharecroppers are numerous will come for instruction in methods of church and community work.

Twenty-nine of the schools are arranged with the cooperation of the Committee on Town and Country, jointly with the Federal Council, whose program of in-service training, Dr. Dawber stated, is now in its thirty-second year.

"Among the purposes of these schools, now held in many states and all regions, are the following: to develop fellowship among ministers in rural communities; to increase the contacts of ministers with officials of farm organizations, government officials, and teachers in agricultural colleges; to help ministers become fully acquainted with tested methods for town and country church work."

Town & Country Church

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Remit to the Home Missions Council

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The following persons with responsibility for town and country church in the religious bodies and interdenominational agencies constitute the *Board of Editors:*

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M. R. ZIGLER, Brethren Service Committee, Church of the Brethren.

BENSON Y. LANDIS, Secretary, Committee on Town and Country, Home Missions Council and Federal Council of Churches; Managing Editor.

Michigan Council of Churches

• The Town and Country Department of the Michigan Council of Churches recently held a conference at the Michigan State College, East Lansing, Michigan. The Chairman of the Department is Professor O. Ulrey, of the College; the Secretary is Rev. Paul Heberlein. The discussion centered on the question, "What Are the Characteristics of a Good Rural Church Program?" Benson Y. Landis, secretary of the Committee on Town and Country, participated.

The Town and Country Department of the Michigan Council is relatively new and is carrying on a vigorous program, including good will conferences that bring together in various parts of the state representatives of all the organized economic groups.

Rural Scouting

• Several members of the Committee on Town and Country attended a recent session of the Committee on Rural Scouting of the Boy Scouts of America. They were impressed with the extent to which the Scout program is being oriented toward the rural community, and with the numerous ways whereby farm boys may participate in a fruitful way.

In connection with the recent meeting O. H. Benson, former National Director of the Rural Scouting Service, received an award from the Boy Scout organization.

For further information about scouting for rural boys, write to a regional or local office in your vicinity, or to Mr. E. H. Baaken, Boy Scouts of America, 2 Park Avenue, New York, N. Y.

Students Serve Rural Churches

• Sixty-eight students of Duke Divinity School are preparing for 10 weeks of work this summer as assistant pastors of rural Methodist churches over all parts of North Carolina, as one of the services of the Duke Endowment to rural churches in this state. Since 1926 funds provided by the Duke Endowment have made possible this summer work of students, in addition to large amounts provided for the building of rural churches.

The Endowment has aided approximately 500 rural Methodist churches in building programs throughout the state, according to statistics released by Dr. J. M. Ormond of the Divinity School, Executive Secretary of the Rural Section of the Duke Endowment. This aid is available for Methodist churches in North Carolina in the open country or in towns of less than 1,500 population.

Gold Medal for McClure

• The National Institute of Social Sciences has given a gold medal for "distinguished service to humanity and the nation" to James G. K. McClure, organizer of the Farmers' Federation, Asheville, North Carolina, and the person who initiated the Lord's Acre Movement among the churches in the Appalachian area. Others receiving the medal were Bernard M. Baruch, and Mrs. Henry P. Davidson of the American Red Cross. When the medal was presented to Mr. McClure, it was said that he had brought "hope and courage to the farmers and youth of America."

We Are Christians Because . . .

We Believe In And Teach:

The eternal presence of God everywhere; the sacrificial resurrection of Christ, the Son of God; the power of His Holy Spirit to redeem mankind; the possession of a divine soul by man, blessed of God; the privilege and opportunity of all men to know the Lord in the free pardon and forgiveness of their sins.

We, With God's Divine Authority, Urge:

That all men everywhere seek to know God's righteousness; that we each one determine to live for Him; that we fully and faithfully give service for the Master; that we call on all men everywhere to come to the Lord NOW and in this, His Divine Way of Life.

We Therefore Have Trusting Faith That:

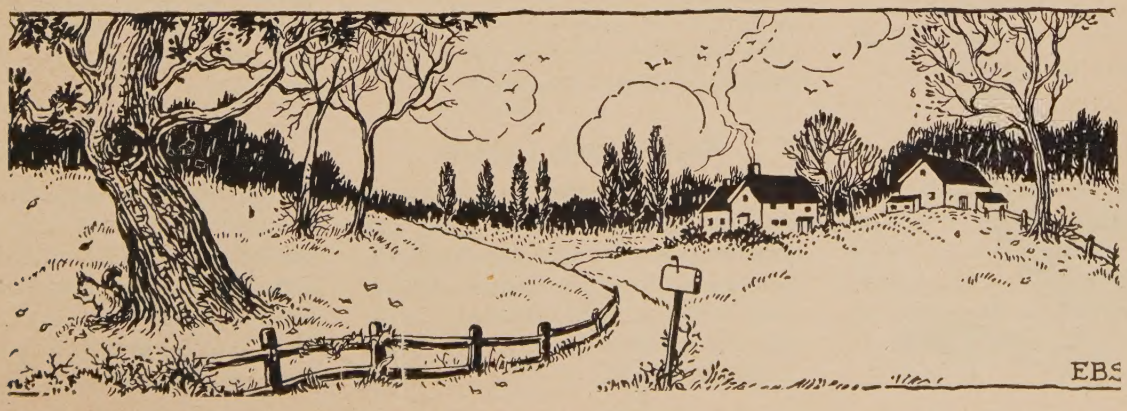
The Lord will not forsake His very own; the Lord will not cause His righteous to be without bread; the Lord will save all alike who trust in Him unto Life Eternal.

Attend Your Church Services Regularly Each Sunday

Thereby you show your faith and trust

In Him
The Blessed Saviour
Of Men

—HERBERT S. MCCONNELL,
(Tennessee) S. E. Jurisdiction, The Methodist Church.



Galt Receives A Teacher

• Galt is a small rural community in Iowa. Like hundreds of villages across the country, Galt had a school, but no regular teacher. The School Board placed an advertisement in the *Des Moines Register,* hoping but not expecting too much. The paper got into the hands of an American scholar who had come to Des Moines after living in a camp for over a year. His ancestry happened to be Japanese.

Patrick Noda had been answering all such ads, twenty in all. But as soon as he stated that his race was Japanese, correspondence was dropped by the other parties. Noda wrote to Galt, hoping but not expecting too much.

Galt's school board pondered over the matter. The board members debated back and forth: "Does a man's ancestry matter?" "No!" was the final answer. Patrick Noda is now the principal of the Galt High School, teaching classes in English, history and bookkeeping. He is a graduate of University of California and Central College, Pella, Iowa.

Where Do Church Leaders Come From?

• In a recent article in *The Messenger,* St. Louis, national organ of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, Rev. Claude J. Snyder said: "Two-thirds of our ministers have been reared in the country and the country church."

"Making Group Discussion Meetings Click"

• C. L. Nash, Extension Division, Michigan State College, East Lansing, Michigan, is the author of an illustrated leaflet, title above. Single copies available on application.

A Balanced Program

• Town and Country Work, The American Baptist Home Mission Society, 212 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., publishes a pamphlet under the title above, prepared by H. C. Loughhead and Gordon L. Vaughn.

Farm Sunday in England

• Prayers were offered on Rogation Sunday, May 14, for crops and workers on the land in Britain. This year the day had additional interest in that it was national "Farm Sunday."

The Bishop of Chichester, Dr. G. K. A. Bell, issued a pastoral letter to his diocese on "The Church and the Countryside," in which he said: "The town and the country are necessary to one another . . . but the townsman often needs to learn greater reverence for the beauty of the countryside and the customs of the countrymen. . . . The whole nation has to be won to the deep understanding of the basic importance of land, and of all who work on the land, in the national economy. . . . Once again I venture to declare that we must get back the right attitude toward nature, which implies the right attitude toward God."

Cowley Fathers

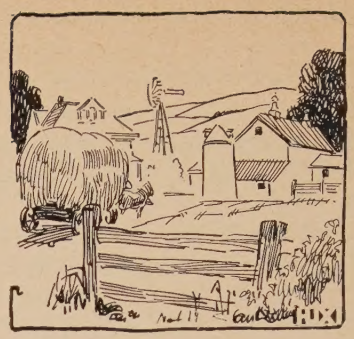
• The agricultural work of the clergy of the Society of St. John the Evangelist, in connection with their monastery at Bracebridge, Ontario, is described in *The Witness,* New York, for May 18, 1944, in an article by Rev. Roland F. Palmer. One of the members of this group, Rev. C. M. Serson, spoke on the work of the rural pastor at the Convocation on the Church in Town and Country, held at Columbus, Ohio, September, 1943.

Protestant Youth

• Fifteen hundred Protestant youth of the United States and Canada are attending the Christian Youth Conference of North America at Lakeside-on-Lake Erie, Ohio, June 27 to July 2, as delegates from the 75 agencies which comprise the United Christian Youth Movement.

Rural Youth Leaders

• The Youth Section of the American Country Life Association, 734 Jackson Place, Washington 6, D. C., announces that its annual conference will be held October 25-28, 1944 at the State Teachers' College, Fredonia, N. Y.



School of Cooperative Living

• For seven months in 1943 the Brethren Civilian Public Service camp at Walhalla, Michigan functioned as a School of Cooperative Living. Some sixty men followed the specialized educational program in cooperatives. The story of that school, written by Dave Newton, Joe Gunterman, and others, is published in a leaflet distributed by the Brethren Service Committee, Elgin, Illinois.

The Depleted Community

• A useful leaflet entitled *Meeting the Problems of the Depleted Community* has been issued by the Division of the Local Church, Board of Education of the Methodist Church, 810 Broadway, Nashville 2, Tennessee. This leaflet was written out of practical experience by Anna Laura Gebhard, who is the wife of the minister of the Methodist Church, Princeton, Minnesota.

Conference at Lisle

• The seventh annual state-wide Rural Church Conference was held at Lisle, New York, May 22-24 under the auspices of the Rural Institute for Religious Workers, the New York Christian Rural Fellowship, and the New York State Council of Churches.

The Post-War Community

• Community Service, Inc., Yellow Springs, Ohio announces a ten-day conference on the "Post-War American Community—What are its Possibilities and How can they be Realized?"—to be held July 5-15 at Antioch College, Yellow Springs.

Book Reviews

Palestine, Land of Promise. By Walter Clay Lowdermilk. New York, Harper and Brothers, 1943. $2.50.

This book, written by the eminent American land conservationist, W. C. Lowdermilk, is the story of the establishment of the Jews in their ancient home of Palestine. After a period of 1200 years during which the land had wasted away, the cities gone into ruin and the people slipped backward into utter decline, the Jews in 1882, inaugurated a movement of resettlement. With religious zeal they have flung themselves into the task. "The way in which these changes are being wrought is one of the most remarkable phenomena of our day," writes Dr. Lowdermilk.

By following sound principles of land settlement and soil conservation, by bringing in varied industries and founding hospitals and clinics, the population has increased rapidly, going from a half million in 1900 to more than a million and a half in 1942!

Granted a government which gives a degree of justice and security, the Jewish people have a love of land and a genius for rebuilding it which should make Palestine a place where "twenty to thirty million people may live decent and prosperous lives where a few million now struggle for a bare existence. It is a land that can flow with milk and honey." The author discusses in detail the resources of various sections of Palestine.

—Mark Rich

The Shepherdess. By Arthur Wentworth Hewitt. Chicago, Willett Clark & Company. $1.75.

The literature on the town and country church contains little "pastoral theology" for the minister's wife. Mr. Hewitt has come to her assistance in *The Shepherdess* as he gives counsel, praise, criticism, warning and guidance. The first chapter, "The Shepherdess as a Lover" may be too frank for some, but it is a needed emphasis.

The fourteen chapters deal with the wife's professional, personal and social qualities and duties. These include such subjects as: The Shepherdess as helpmeet, the good shepherdess, economics in the manse and the scope and skills as presiding officer, executive, hostess, teacher and as public speaker. A final chapter on the "Care of a Shepherdess" is directed to the pastor. (He may read it over his wife's shoulder and profit by it.)

The author wisely emphasizes the thought that the spirit of the home must be maintained by loving respect and by a genuine experience of worship. Common sense and patience are among the first requisites. This book fills a real need.

—Mrs. Mark Rich

Soldiers of the Soil

• The above is the title of a new motion picture produced by DuPont, Wilmington, Delaware, portraying the contributions to the national welfare being made by farm people in their homes and on their farms today. This is available in 16mm. and 35mm. sizes for sound equipment. The running time is forty minutes.

It is available without charge to local motion picture exhibitors, farm organizations, schools, churches, etc. The film may be kept in a community for several weeks if necessary. Those receiving and using the picture must pay express to return it.

Hiwassee Seminar

• A seminar on "The Land, Family, Church and Community" was held June 5-9, at Hiwassee College, Madisonville, Tennessee. Among the sponsors was the Committee on Land Tenure of the Committee on Town and Country. Officers of the TVA and the University of Tennessee cooperated.

Rural Health

• The Farm Foundation, 600 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, recently held a national conference on rural health, attended by representatives of numerous voluntary and government agencies interested in the subject.

What Makes a Church Vital?

• Rev. LeRoy J. Day publishes a study of Baptist Rural Churches in two associations of Wisconsin in a booklet with the title above. Mark Rich writes an introduction. The booklet is published jointly by the Wisconsin Baptist State Convention, 1717 W. Wells Street, Milwaukee, and The American Baptist Home Mission Society, 212 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

A.C.L.A.

• The American Country Life Association recently held a national conference at Chicago with more than 150 representatives of over 70 national and state agencies in attendance. The Secretary of the association is Dr. O. F. Hall, Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana; the President is Dr. D. E. Lindstrom, College of Agriculture, Urbana, Illinois.

Brethren Service

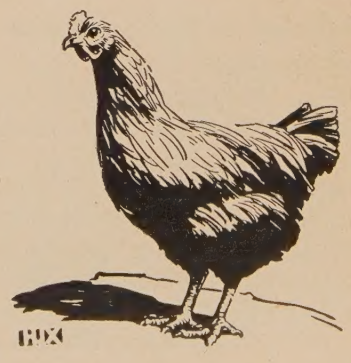
• Recent publications of the Brethren Service Committee, Church of the Brethren, Elgin, Illinois:—

"Brethren Serve"—an illustrated booklet describing all the relief-giving projects of the church.

"Women Serve in Mental Hospitals"—a leaflet telling about the work of young women of the church in the service of the Elgin State Hospital.

From a Country Pastor

• "I have a strong conviction, at present, that the whole rural problem must be worked out on the local field. Even one or two churches in each state facing and solving the problems successfully will count for more than anything else in building a Christian rural America."



A Farmer's Ode to the Holy Earth

THOUGH I farm with the skill of the finest of nature's husbandmen, and love not the holy earth, I am become a farmer just earning a living,—one unconscious of the Divine in my vocation.

And though I raise the best in orchard, field and flock; and though I have the keenest understanding of modern agriculture; and though I have all tools and money so as to overcome the most stubborn obstacles to crop raising, and have not love of the soil, my soul is not fed.

Love of the holy earth does not shut out modern methods, neither does it seek to exploit them for personal gain and prestige; is not easily discouraged; does not brood over possessions and advertised luxuries; rejoices not in others helplessness and its own good fortune, but rejoices in that which is genuine and true.

When I fail to see God's will for the future of His holy earth then I must be rededicated for I know but little and I serve imperfectly. But when I find in farming "A Way of Life," that which is unworthy of a husbandman of God shall be done away.

When I was a young man I dreamed great dreams for my farm home. I allowed my love of this family farm to take on holiness in my young mind. Now I know that the blessing of God is upon it and that I am responsible to Him for it.

Even in this twentieth century I see agriculture as a way of life very dimly. Some day this will grow and I shall see it clearly. Now only a few see God's hand, but then it shall be known as God knows it.

Now abideth faith in the skilled hand, hope in the constancy of creation, love of the holy earth, these three; but the greatest of these is love of God's holy earth.

—Kenneth A. Roadarmel

Shepherds and Their Sheep

✠ O God, who didst deliver the shepherd David, when he had put his life in jeopardy for the lambs of the flock: Keep Thou, we beseech Thee, all who keep sheep; and grant that, when the storm ariseth, they may be strong in Thee to seek that which is scattered abroad; through Him, who is the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A. CAMPBELL FRASER, *A Book of Prayers,* Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1934.

For Joy in God's Creation

✠ O Heavenly Father, who hast filled the world with beauty; open, we beseech Thee, our eyes to behold Thy gracious hand in all Thy works; that rejoicing in Thy whole creation, we may learn to serve Thee with gladness; for the sake of Him by whom all things were made, Thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Book of Common Prayer

For Husbandry

✠ Almighty God, giver of the seed and the soil; of the word and the understanding; of the heavenly life and the earthly vessel; teach us the good husbandry of the heart, so that Thy precious word may bring forth fruit; and that we, having the conditions of spiritual readiness to receive the water of life, may thereby be refreshed for our daily life, and fitted at last for the life eternal. We ask it through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

GEORGE DAWSON, *Prayers,* Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co.

The Springtime of the Soul

✠ O Thou, our Everliving Creator, who in the springtime makest the trees to bud and blossom; grant unto us Thy children a springtime of the soul in which our spirits flower in the radiant beauty of their Creator. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

ROBERT IRVING HOWLAND

Next Issue

• The next issue is planned for delivery in September, 1944. There will be no publication planned for July or August.

Great Road Project

• The *National Grange Monthly* features in its April, 1944 issue information about the large interregional highway system almost 34,000 miles in length, recently recommended for post-war construction by government authorities.

Milkweed Floss

• Milkweed floss is needed to fill life jackets for American soldiers and sailors. Many young people will be gathering it this summer and fall. A pamphlet telling about this project is available free from the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C. Ask for AWI —94.

Contributors

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Contributions Wanted

• Every reader is a potential contributor of material for this paper.

We need three types of material:

(1) Articles of about 900 words (to fill a page), descriptive of a local program.

(2) Short items; news, plans, publications available.

(3) Illustrations; glossy photos, line drawings, cuts of rural scenes.

Circulars Available

• Quantities of circulars describing TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH are available without charge to any reader. Simply drop us a post card, letting us know how many copies you would like to distribute.